



# High-Performance Engines

BY JEFFREY STEIN

*Heuer Chronographs – Fascination of Timekeepers and Motor Sports 1960's / 1970's* by Arno Michael Haslinger celebrates the bond between racing and the house of Heuer

**W**atches and cars . . . cars and watches . . . indeed, they have so much in common. Gears, levers, wheels, cams, plates, springs, clutches, discs, rollers, brakes, screws, and pinions . . . many of the mechanical components are the same, though they vary considerably in their size. As machines, the car and the watch share many attributes—the beauty of their design, the thoroughness of their engineering, the importance of reliability and endurance.

Beyond the machines themselves, we see shared values among

their enthusiasts. Those who enjoy the finest cars often enjoy the finest watches; and those who collect the watches often have an eye for the cars.

So it is not surprising that modern watch brands seek to employ the heritage and romantic imagery of motorsports in designing and marketing their watches.

While commemorative watches that look back to great racing machines may appeal to many of today's consumers, vintage watch collectors ask some different questions: Which watches were part of motorsports in the golden age

of racing? Which watches did the racers wear, before the days of paid ambassadors, before the cars were covered with decals selling candy bars to the children, detergent to the women, and the “little blue pills” to the middle-aged men? Which stopwatches did the crews use, as they leaned on the pit wall, to time the laps, before beacons and satellites handled the timing?

Several watch brands would have us think that they were there, but how legitimate are these claims?

So when collectors hear of another book, article, advertise-



ment, exhibition or website that celebrates the watch / car connection, we are skeptical. Haven't we seen these images before? Hasn't it all been written?

#### Good news

Well, enthusiasts, there is some good news here. In his new book, *Heuer Chronographs – Fascination of Timekeepers and Motor Sports 1960's / 1970's* (Callwey Publishing) Arno Michael Haslinger presents the car/watch connection as we have never seen it presented before.

You see, in these 288 pages, it is the chronographs—the little machines powered by the little springs that move the balance wheel at 300 revolutions per minute—that dominate the powerful racing machines.

Haslinger creates this juxtaposition of small and large machines through powerful photos of his beloved chronographs, photos that elevate the watches to reach emotional and visual parity with the racecars.

It is a mistake, however, to suggest that either the watches or

the racecars dominate Haslinger's book. Rather, Haslinger's achievement is in showing us how the racers celebrated both their small machines and their larger ones. Haslinger presents the Heuer

the early 1900s and added a full line of chronographs in the 1940s, for many collectors, the icons began with the Autavia (1962) and Carrera (1964). These legendary chronographs continued with

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chronographs, the racecars, the tracks, the cams, the gears, the motors and the romance, as a single experience.

The racers show off their chronographs; the crewmembers operate the stopwatches on their clipboards; race officials operate the timing equipment. It is a world in which racing and chronographs, though functioning on two entirely different scales, are powered by the same energy and produce the same romance.

The book covers what many would consider the "golden age" of Heuer chronographs. While Heuer had produced chronographs from

the Monaco in 1969, and then expanded through the 1970's, with a variety of colors and shapes that celebrated the Silverstone, Daytona, Monza and Montreal racetracks.

The common thread that runs through Haslinger's two decades is the connection to motorsports. No astronauts, pilots, sailors or explorers here, just the racers and their chronographs.

Haslinger's presentation is nothing short of stunning. The book features eighty-one chronographs, and each is a new old stock or near mint sample.

This is not a picture book to be displayed on the coffee table.



*Heuer Chronographs* is a reference work that provides comprehensive information on the Heuer chronographs of the 1960s and 1970s. Each of the watches that Haslinger shows is described in intricate detail. We start with the obvious features (such as case material, style of hands, number of registers and identity of the movement), but Haslinger goes further, to describe elements such as the construction of the registers, the application of the luminous material, the grain on the case backs and the frame around the date window.

This is the information that allows the collector to confirm the authenticity of his watches (or to identify a fake), before making the purchase.

Especially interesting are Haslinger's descriptions of how

the names of the various models were derived. While most collectors can decode the references to "Daytona", "Carrera" and "Montreal," Haslinger also explains that the "Cortina" was intended to capture the atmosphere of the town that hosted the 1956 Winter Olympics and that the "Verona" represented the chic cultural image of that Italian city.

Fittingly, Jack Heuer wrote the book's introduction. He had taken the reins in the early 1960s and it was his fascination with auto racing that powered the brand into the modern era.

As modern-day watch brands seek to take advantage of connections with cars, racers and races, whether these connections are real or imagined, it is gratifying to have a volume that presents the very best of a brand that can

honestly claim to own the largest share of that heritage.

The chronographs of the 1960's and 1970s were hand-wound and produced less than one millionth of a horsepower. But after forty years and over six billion movements of the balance wheel, many of the chronographs continue to run strong today (unlike many of the racing cars).

Examining Haslinger's magnificent collection of chronographs and his wonderful book, this endurance may be the ultimate testament to the strength and beauty of these little racing machines. ☺

*For orders please contact Martina Langer: m.langer@callwey.de, (0049)89436005176) at Callwey Publishers or Jasper Bitter, (0049)2157874946, Jasperbitter@aol.com.*